

NORTHAMPTON VISION 2020

VISION AND CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

A BLUEPRINT FOR THE NORTHAMPTON VISION 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In early 1999, the city asked the public, in workshops and other formats, how Northampton should look in the next 20 years. This summary emerged from those public conversations. This information, which needs a great deal of refinement, elaboration and public participation, will guide the Northampton Vision 2020 comprehensive plan that will be written starting in 2000. The goals, objectives, and actions will be refined and elaborated after more public participation.

For updated information on the Vision 2020 comprehensive planning process, see the Vision 2020 section of the city's web page at: www.city.northampton.ma.us

Adopted by the Northampton Planning Board, June 10 1999.

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Adopted Northampton Planning Board: June 10, 1999

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A VISION FOR THE FUTURE:

WE, the residents of the City of Northampton, including the villages of Florence, Leeds, and Bay State, want to retain all that makes this place we call home so attractive. We know that our community represents a special union between a slowed-down rural life and a vibrant urban one. We also know that this place could be a more perfect union, a city where differences are more warmly embraced, all are educated well and both natives and newcomers can find a home.

Today, after more than a century, the phrases on our city seal remain helpful directives: caritas (charity,) educatio (education,) and justitia (justice.)

With those larger ideas in mind, we envision a city of distinct places, which are at once separate in geography and connected as part of a larger community. We care about this city precisely because it has what so many other communities' lack: a sense of place. The physical character of our buildings, the beauty of the landscape, and the passion for community we citizens hold dear makes this city livable and worth planning for.

In too many cities and towns across this country, one strip mall looks like any other. No one should mistake this city for another. We aim to keep it that way.

At the commercial center of this city is our vibrant downtown, a place distinct from the smaller villages of Florence center, Leeds or Bay State. Downtown should be treated differently than the villages. We invite commercial enterprises to fill in the nooks and crannies that remain vacant downtown. We also welcome expansion that adds to a walking-friendly, bustling atmosphere that is a region-wide destination spot for shoppers and tourists.

We also realize that by achieving a narrow, albeit necessary, market niche, downtown has lost some dear qualities. Few stores cater to local needs (no one can buy a hammer downtown.) The rental cost of apartments and business space has risen steeply, pushing out those of low and moderate incomes. Some feel that success has stolen our downtown.

While many of us see downtown as a commercial engine, we view our villages as our keepsakes, places to be

saved and cherished. Florence center and Leeds remind us that while Northampton is a city, we have town roots. If Florence center grows, it should do so within already existing boundaries. The commercial center should not push into and threaten the bordering residential neighborhoods.

Because we admire village life, where small stores sell to local customers and neighbors frequently see each other walking in town, we look to extend that pattern. As much as possible, we want to avoid sprawling neighborhoods that have no center. We want to encourage small stores to open within and near the entrances to our villages, and there also we should encourage community and civic centers, where senior citizens and our youth can gather.

We want compact development patterns that are pleasant and safe for pedestrians and bicyclists, while not restricting public choice for a variety of housing and development styles. Compact development provides job opportunities and encourages people to build retail stores and homes close together. That sort of development binds together a neighborhood and reduces automobile use by making public transportation, walking and bicycling more practical.

While, at present, prosperity reigns in our community, work remains. We want to improve the availability and diversity of well-paying jobs for our residents, so many of whom have difficulty finding work that pays enough to raise a family on. Helping to create jobs from different sectors of the economy — technology, the arts, industry, education and service — allows for people of different economic levels to live here.

To allow a more diverse population to live here, we need to increase housing opportunities in every city neighborhood for families of all incomes. We must do this out of a sense of justice, and because democracy and pluralism depends on the creativity inspired by diverse ideas and points of view.

The quality of life in Northampton remains the envy of many. To maintain it, we will ensure that any future housing growth or industrial development, improves, rather than compromises the quality of life. Growth should be at a human scale and sustainable in the long run.

Part of the job of maintaining the quality of life here is recognizing why this city succeeds. While many of the building blocks for success have been here for years, some credit must also go to the legions of artists who have made homes here and who have created a community honoring creativity. The prosperous economy here, in part, reflects the good works of many artists. As a city, let us not take this artist-economy for granted.

Education is one of the foundations of our community, both as an economic force and a moral guidepost. The university and colleges in the area give many of us work, and we desperately believe that our public schools must imbue in our children a love of learning. And yet, education is one of our greatest frustrations. While we push for one of the best public education systems in the state, our financial means restrict us. We are a city of moderate incomes with high educational ambitions. We want to build better schools, provide more teachers and buy more books. Too often, we miss those targets. We want to ensure that youth services go beyond our schools and involve youth in the essential aspects of our community life that applies to them.

Just as we value our children, we realize and respect how much our senior citizens mean to our community. One way we can honor them is to ensure they remain independent, active, and able to contribute to the community for as long as possible. Community centers provide places for seniors and others to gather and share in community life.

Many of us depend on and love our automobiles. At the same time, many of us identify car and truck traffic as the biggest factor eroding our quality of life. Throughout the city, in rich and poor neighborhoods, speeding car and truck traffic frightens us and forces us back into our homes and off the streets. We want our traffic laws obeyed. We also want our city engineered in such a manner that vehicles must slow down while driving through Northampton. More than forcing vehicles to slow down, though, we want this city to become more friendly to those using alternative forms of transportation. We want safe and direct walking paths, lanes that allow bicycle commuting and short cuts that allow people on foot or bicycle to get places directly. We do not see this issue as one of ancillary importance, rather one of paramount concern.

While there is much to celebrate here — our standing as a premier arts community, our villages that retain enduring character and the beauty of the undeveloped countryside — work remains to be done. Let's get to it.

SUMMARY OF GOALS

GOAL 1: MAINTAIN VIBRANT URBAN AND VILLAGE CENTERS

GOAL 2: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC EXPANSION AND JOB CREATION:

GOAL 3: ENHANCE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING:

GOAL 4: IMPROVE MULTI-MODAL CIRCULATION AND PARKING SYSTEMS

GOAL 5: CALM TRAFFIC TO PRESERVE NEIGHBORHOODS AND VILLAGES

GOAL 6: EXPAND OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

GOAL 7: PRESERVE TRADITIONAL LAND USE PATTERNS WITHOUT CREATING SPRAWL

GOAL 8: ENHANCE SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

GOAL 9: PRESERVE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 1: MAINTAIN VIBRANT URBAN AND VILLAGE CENTERS

- Enhance pedestrian-friendliness of commercial areas.
- Enhance downtown's standing as commercial, civic and cultural center of region.
- Maintain Florence center and satellite commercial areas and villages as local-serving commercial areas.
- Improve commercial buffers of urban and village centers.
- Help locally-based retail stores and services.
- Redevelop former Northampton State Hospital as a vibrant village center.

Policies, objectives and actions from workshops. Will be expanded during comprehensive planning process.

Policies and objectives to meet goals	Partial list of actions for goals and objectives
	<input type="checkbox"/> To be done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially completed, but can use improvement.
Help create more commercial buildings in village or urban vacant spaces. Make sure no historically or architecturally significant building is lost.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoning parking credit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimensional standards <input type="checkbox"/> Design standards for downtown <input type="checkbox"/> Tax policies (TIF)
Increase the number of official walking routes downtown and in villages. Make those routes are obvious, direct and interesting, making downtown and the villages walking friendly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Improve walking routes and bike paths <input type="checkbox"/> Increase density of activity to make walking interesting
Increase the budget of city's Arts Council. Bring more civic and cultural events to the city.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide civic and cultural spaces and financially support them.
Convert commercial strips at the edge of downtown so that they look more like the central business district.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expand Central Business District boundary on Pleasant Street and Bridge Street when appropriate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revitalize Pleasant Street to make commercial area vibrant
Retain and expand traditional village amenities downtown by giving tax breaks and extending zoning privileges.	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning to ensure low rent areas available <input type="checkbox"/> Loan programs
Make sure that retail commercial growth occurs downtown, Florence center, State Hospital and pedestrian-scale areas. Guide land- and truck-extensive businesses to new Business Park, King Street and industrial areas.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoning boundaries and districts <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision standards <input type="checkbox"/> CDBG and other state and federal grant funding <input type="checkbox"/> Economic development activities
Create a satellite commercial area near Florence Road and Route 66. It should provide local needs as needed (see map). Commercial entranceways to Florence, downtown or Leeds should have a village look, not resemble commercial strips.	<input type="checkbox"/> Zone new commercial satellite area and expand (see map) <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure and streetscape in entranceway areas <input type="checkbox"/> Zone changes for strip areas
Lobby state and county politicians to keep government offices downtown.	<input type="checkbox"/> Set example with city government <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage other institutions, especially state and federal
Minimize losses of historical building downtown. Increase the pedestrian-scale commercial design.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Downtown design standards <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dimensional standards in downtown and Florence
Increase visibility of public road signs. Make sure private signs conform with downtown aesthetic.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoning regulations and city practices

Make sure that Florence business district grows within already existing boundaries. No residential or greenspace should be lost to commercial growth.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional zoning changes in residential neighborhoods
Provide more public benches, cigarette disposal receptacles, trash cans, telephones, restrooms, and garden spaces downtown and in village centers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bike paths, bike linkages and bike racks <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Streetscape improvements, public art, kiosks, benches <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Underground utilities, period streetlights, restrooms, pay phones
Parks and greenspace should be used to keep urban and village centers attractive for pedestrian traffic, without creating dead spots that impede pedestrian flow.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Encourage redevelopment of Round Housing Parking Lot downtown to create mixed use development while preserving or expanding the number of parking spaces.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conduct a hazardous waste assessment and address any findings. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consider how to encourage private development of air rights above lot.
Increase landscaping along King Street to make it more appealing.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoning regulations must force businesses to landscape.

Significant inconsistencies between vision of maintaining vibrant urban and village commercial areas and current practices:

- 1) Current in-lieu of parking fees are one of the biggest disincentives for downtown development.
- 2) The lack of downtown parking is discouraging downtown development.

GOAL 2: ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC EXPANSION AND JOB CREATION:

- Expand local economy by creating and retaining jobs.
- Diversify economy.
- Promote and grow local businesses when possible.
- Retain and enhance education, amenities, housing, and character that make city attractive to businesses and customers.
- Ensure development is sustainable over long-term and is low-polluting.
- Ensure economic growth does not interfere with community goals or vision and conforms with Vision 2020.
- Leverage private capital to finance long term investment, create jobs, generate taxes and create marketplace opportunities.
- Provide strong focus on sectors of the local economy where investment is lagging.

Policies, objectives and actions from workshops. Will be expanded during comprehensive planning process.

Policies and objectives to meet goals	Partial list of actions for goals and objectives
	<input type="checkbox"/> To be done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially completed, but can use improvement.
Increase by 50 percent small businesses in city, with emphasis on small business development, retention of locally-grown businesses, and providing incubator opportunities for new local businesses.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implement business retention strategy, including emphasis on small business development, retention of locally-grown businesses, and providing incubator opportunities for new local businesses.
Make sure that existing commercial and industrial land parcels are filled in next 20 years, especially old mill buildings, with sensitivity to surrounding residential areas.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use zoning and CDBG assistance
Increase downtown commercial development by 50 percent, especially those enterprises supplying goods serving local needs and those businesses which bring new export dollars into the community. Best areas to develop are those with good access to parking.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use zoning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parking improvements (see parking session) <input type="checkbox"/> Reconsider parking in-lieu of fees <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus on infrastructure and streetscape
Double industrial opportunities in commercial, industrial, and business park areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Expand infrastructure to business park. <input type="checkbox"/> Improve infrastructure and road access at NSH (state hospital) and industrial park. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider installing traffic actuated lights at intersection of Routes 10, 66 and 9.
Rewrite city regulatory and non-regulatory objectives to encourage sustainable development friendly to the environment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Use zoning performance standards and other regulations <input type="checkbox"/> Use public investment and tax programs
City economic development efforts should focus on improving job opportunities for all, especially living wage jobs and job opportunities for people who are underserved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make sure that in developable areas commercial development occurs before housing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Write guidelines for NSH (state hospital) land that encourages commercial growth before residential.

Significant inconsistencies between vision of economic development and current practices:

- 1) The lack of public investment in infrastructure prevents new commercial real estate from being available to meet demand.**
- 2) Higher costs of development in urban center and villages, in part because of infrastructure policies, discourages new investment in these areas.**

GOAL 3: ENHANCE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING:

- Preserve vital neighborhoods near downtown, Florence center and throughout the city.
- Maintain high and medium density housing downtown.
- Retain affordable housing and encourage new dispersed affordable housing in every neighborhood.
- Resist gentrification and the income stratification that it brings.
- Allow housing growth to meet demand without creating stress on municipal services or sense of community
- Encourage common ground between neighborhood groups across the city.
- Help build neighborhood cohesion and self-identity.
- Preserve ability of consumers to have a choice of housing types.

Policies, objectives and actions from workshops. Will be expanded during comprehensive planning process.

Policies and objectives to meet goals	PARTIAL LIST OF Actions for goals and objectives
	<input type="checkbox"/> To be done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially completed, but can use improvement.
Make available low-interest loans for more homeowners to preserve the vitality and density of residential neighborhoods in and around downtown, Florence center and other village centers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Invest in infrastructure in these residential areas. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide regulatory protection for incompatible development
Increase the amount of affordable housing, so that well above 10 percent of the housing units are affordable. Preserve a range of housing types and costs throughout the city. Including these options in all appropriate areas avoids neighborhood conflicts about certain areas receiving an inappropriately high concentration of any housing type.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preserve affordable housing units. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Require or strongly encourage all new subdivisions and housing projects to provide affordable housing.
Allow no commercial development threatening the integrity of residential neighborhoods.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Do not convert residentially zoned areas in urban centers and villages to commercially zoned areas except for key parcels in the downtown. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encourage mixed commercial/residential areas in high traffic areas immediately surrounding downtown.
Increase the amount of new mixed residential/commercial/industrial development in business and industrial areas when that it will not displace commercial, industrial or artists' space.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encourage mixed commercial/residential areas appropriate special industrial areas and in all commercial areas.
Limit housing development in city's outlying areas, where it will stress municipal services and alter the character of the community.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider phased development and adequate public facilities ordinances. <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen subdivision bylaws to ensure subdivisions minimize public burdens. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage housing in areas with adequate sewer and water service. <input type="checkbox"/> Require housing developers to preserve open space and natural resources.
City should become a participant in linking community groups	<input type="checkbox"/> Designate a city liaison who brokers meetings between community groups, or create a bulletin board, electronic if possible, so groups can communicate.
Enhance the beauty of neighborhoods and the livability of them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Plant trees near sidewalks. Acquire pocket parks, on land of less than 6,000 square feet — the minimum area of land needed for a building lot — and acquire other land unlikely to be built on.

Encourage the growth of neighborhood projects and organizations	<input type="checkbox"/> City must be willing to cost share in purchasing tot lots or pocket parks in CDBG income-eligible areas
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Significant inconsistencies between vision of enhancing neighborhoods and current practices:

- 1) Some neighborhoods are at risk from commercial development, without adequate zoning protection.**
- 2) The lack of a regulatory and incentive push for affordable housing and a range of housing prices in every new subdivision limits affordable housing and creates a perception that some neighborhoods are host to an “unfair burden” of urban problems while wealthy new developments avoid them.**

Subdivision standards, and to lesser extent zoning and other ordinances, allow and may even encourage new residential development other than the traditional neighborhood development which is so valued in Northampton.

GOAL 4: IMPROVE MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION, PARKING AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

- Ensure clear flow of people, goods, services and information (roads, paths, computer networks).
- Change traffic circulation systems to allow for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Encourage more mass transit that people will use.
- Improve accessibility and affordability of parking without adding parking that detracts from pedestrian scale.
- Require compact development patterns that encourage walking and biking.
- Reduce traffic congestion downtown, near Coolidge Bridge, on King Street and on Damon Road.

Policies, objectives and actions from workshops. Will be expanded during comprehensive planning process.

Policies and objectives to meet goals	Partial list of actions for goals and objectives
Business development should generally be encouraged build in the urban core and redeveloped areas that are most suited to providing pedestrian, bicycle traffic, or transit access.	<input type="checkbox"/> To be done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially completed, but can use improvement.
Create multi-modal transportation system with the pedestrian and bicycle circulation and and alternative transportation systems that allow residents to find alternatives to automobiles for many of their trips.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use zoning to encourage infill. <input type="checkbox"/> Reexamine in-lieu of parking fees <input type="checkbox"/> Redevelop state hospital, as urban village <input type="checkbox"/> Improve transit and explore improved urban center looped bus service. <input type="checkbox"/> Explore free public bikes program. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop 12 mile bike path network linking all urban and village centers in Northampton together and with those in surrounding communities. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop short bicycle paths to connect city streets through paper streets and other paths that can shorten distances for bicycles and pedestrians. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop 20 mile bike lane and bike route system linking residential areas with bike paths and urban and village centers (see attached map) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop park-and-ride lot, with bicycle lockers, at Sheldon Field, on the U. Mass express bus line. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide better bus linkages to Holyoke, and from there to Holyoke Community College and Springfield, to Florence and to Easthampton. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop park-and-ride lot, with bicycle lockers, somewhere in Florence area. <input type="checkbox"/> Use land use regulations to ensure development is transportation and bicycle-friendly. <input type="checkbox"/> Install more bicycle racks throughout the city, including at bus stops. Install weather and vandalism protecting bicycle racks at key locations. <input type="checkbox"/> Make bus stops more user-friendly by posting bus route maps and schedules and by creating more stops, especially an additional Main Street stop.
Do a citywide analysis of existing major intersections and traffic flow throughout the city. Determine how intersections enhance or harm the character of the community, not just the immediate intersection area. Evaluate these tradeoffs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review and improve safety and functioning of critical urban center intersections. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evaluate new development and traffic improvements to consider off-site impacts on residential neighborhoods. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider traffic light at intersection of Hampden Ave. and Pleasant St. <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate options for using Damon Road/Bridge Road as formal route 9A

Buy new land to expand public parking off Main Street, downtown, without creating dead areas in pedestrian traffic flow. Meet parking demands by building new lots, using existing lots more intensely, encouraging non-car transportation alternatives, and using walking routes to shorten walking distances so that existing parking can serve new needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Create second downtown structured parking facility (garage or deck) north of Main Street. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop public and private lots in and especially at edge of downtown, but not at the loss of residential structures or open space opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> Shared use of private parking lots to meet parking needs from multiple land uses, some of which may generate peak parking demands at different times.
Retain the tradition of free parking in Florence center.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No change needed to the system. Encourage private parking lots.
Encourage commercial development in areas with access to public or private parking, especially on the edge of downtown, while preserving downtown's pedestrian nature.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expand the Central Business and General Business Districts when it will encourage infill at pedestrian-scale.
Increase by 10 percent the density of housing in and within walking distance of downtown. Encourage new downtown mixed residential development to minimize the need for driving downtown.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use zoning and public funds to encourage infill housing in and around downtown. Infill housing should replicate existing land use patterns or, close to the urban core, include mixed residential/commercial.
The final comprehensive plan needs an overview of existing traffic patterns	<input type="checkbox"/> Summarize all existing traffic counts and flows as part of analysis of Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan.
Use a citywide bicycle or bicycle/pedestrian committee to help coordinate non-motor vehicle transportation improvements	<input type="checkbox"/> Transform existing rail trail committee to bicycle committee by broadening membership and charge.
Make sure downtown is pedestrian friendly, and explore possibility of re-routing some of Route 9 traffic from Main Street to Damon Road and Bridge Road.	<input type="checkbox"/> Study impact of re-routing some traffic from Route 9 and creating a Route 9A. <input type="checkbox"/> Raise crosswalks across Main St. that would make pedestrians feel safer while not complicating snow removal. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider expanding traffic islands in middle of Main Street.

Significant inconsistencies between vision of multi-modal transportation and current practices:

- 1) City and state focus on roads primarily for motorized traffic makes it harder to have non-motorized transportation.**
- 2) While zoning encourages “good” development patterns, it also allows new development’s land use patterns, especially in residential areas, and is often at odds with a goal of encouraging non-motorized transportation and pedestrian-scale development.**
- 3) Encouraging more public transportation often is difficult sell to a society so in love with cars.**
- 4) There is an apparent conflict between encouraging infill downtown and in nearby residential neighborhoods, while promoting pocket parks and preserving the character of neighborhoods.**

GOAL 5: CALM TRAFFIC TO PRESERVE NEIGHBORHOODS AND VILLAGES

- Slow automobile traffic to retain safe, livable, child-friendly neighborhoods.
- Slow automobile traffic to retain pedestrian-friendly villages and urban centers.

Policies, objectives and actions from workshops. Will be expanded during comprehensive planning process.

Policies and objectives to meet goals	Partial list of actions for goals and objectives
Enforcement regulations to calm traffic.	<input type="checkbox"/> To be done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially completed, but can use improvement. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Police should increase focus on enforcing traffic laws, slowing traffic speed and improving traffic safety.
Educate citizens to calm traffic.	<input type="checkbox"/> Organize neighborhood groups aimed at educating citizens about the danger of speeding. Bring back Safe Roads Program or its equivalent.
Engineer roads to calm traffic and reduce speeds. Engineer traffic calming in whenever roads are reconstructed and for high priority retrofits to improve traffic safety, retain pedestrian-scale and child-friendly neighborhoods and streets. Improve safety of pedestrian crosswalks and intersections.	<input type="checkbox"/> Create raised crosswalks at sidewalk level (vertical displacement) <input type="checkbox"/> Use patterned asphalt for crosswalks that contrast with the street. <input type="checkbox"/> Use vertical streetscape elements (trees, etc) to make streets look narrower. <input type="checkbox"/> Create sidewalk extensions ("neck-downs") and pedestrian refuge areas, such as traffic islands. <input type="checkbox"/> Use other horizontal displacements, such as chicanes, to slow traffic (generally every 250-300 feet). <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow non-arterial streets to 11 foot lanes through use of on-street parking, medians/islands and bike lanes (which both accommodate bikes and calm traffic). Portland found 1-3 MPH reduction from bike paths.
Create safe roads committee to consider multi-department effort at calming traffic.	<input type="checkbox"/> Create committee with members from city boards, departments and the public. Coordinate actions with city bicycle committee.
Minimize pedestrian "dead-spaces" at intersections, crosswalks and parking lots.	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep parking lots interesting through landscaping or buildings between the lots and the road

Significant inconsistencies between vision of calming traffic and current practices:

- 1) The city's lack of engineered traffic calming measures in streets encourages people to drive faster.
- 2) Subdivision Regulations that allow subdivisions to be built without interconnecting streets create isolated areas of very low traffic and other areas which must host high speed arterials.

GOAL 6: EXPAND OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

- .Preserve and expand city holdings of open space, wild lands and small pieces of open land in developed areas.
- Use open space and recreation to ensure that the urban and village centers are attractive places to live, work and visit.
- Make more natural areas available for public use.
- Provide recreation opportunities for individuals of all ages and physical abilities now and for future generations.
- Preserve the character of rural areas, farms, forests, and rivers

Policies, objectives and actions from workshops. Will be expanded during comprehensive planning process.

Policies and objectives to meet goals	Partial list of actions for goals and objectives
	<input type="checkbox"/> To be done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially completed, but can use improvement.
Make sure all appropriate recreation areas are accessible to those with physical disabilities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete handicap accessibility improvements at all feasible recreation areas
Upgrade all parks in urban and developed areas.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Add and maintain downtown and Florence pocket parks, green ways, rail trail (bike path) linkages and Mill River access.
Increase the number of ball fields by at least 10 to serve burgeoning recreation needs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acquire land for ball fields at Northampton State Hospital and in western section of city.
Link all the city's conservation districts to each other with greenways so that hikers and walkers can traverse the city. Create a citywide trail system that is marked.	<input type="checkbox"/> Explore possibility of getting easements from private landowners, so hikers can cross to public lands.
Add to the city's conservation land holdings by acquiring small green areas downtown and in villages of Bay State, Leeds and Florence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Commission must make it a priority
Provide recreation, conservation and open space opportunities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acquire parcels that are accessible to residents. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acquire parcels that help define neighborhoods and the community. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acquire restrictions to preserve farms, forests and rivers and other resources. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acquire parcels for new recreation opportunities.
Acquire land with vistas and interesting landscapes, especially in western edge of city.	<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Commission charge.
Make sure that no city farm goes out of business. Farm land should not be lost to housing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Link city farmers with conservation groups and state agricultural protection restriction program. <input type="checkbox"/> Foster the current Northampton farmers' market.
Acquire land that serves as gateway between urban, suburban or rural landscapes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Commission charge.

Significant inconsistencies between vision and current practices: 1) New development is not contributing to the preservation of open space and is converting open space to housing much faster than open space is being preserved.

Significant inconsistencies between vision of open space and current practices:

- 1) New development is not required to provide compensating open space, except in the very limited number of PUDs and cluster subdivisions.**

GOAL 7: PRESERVE TRADITIONAL LAND USE PATTERNS WITHOUT CREATING SPRAWL

- Redevelop vacant land in built-up areas, guarding against sprawl.
- Promote new villages (commercial, residential areas) where feasible.
- Foster continued mixture of uses in villages: Florence, Leeds, Bay State.
- Discourage development damaging village character of urban/residential neighborhoods.
- Ensure new downtown development meshes with architectural heritage.
- Maintain clear distinction between rural, suburban and urban areas.
- Promote traditional neighborhood development patterns.

Policies, objectives and actions from workshops. Will be expanded during comprehensive planning process.

Policies and objectives to meet goals	Partial list of actions for goals and objectives
	<input type="checkbox"/> To be done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially completed, but can use improvement.
New development should be accompanied by open space preservation so that at least one acre of open space is preserved for each acre of land developed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acquire open space for conservation and recreation purposes. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use zoning to ensure open space preservation.
Suburban style development should be matched by an equal or greater amount of compact development.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amend zoning and subdivision regulations, <input type="checkbox"/> Add adequate facilities/concurrency ordinance with no development until city services/water and sewer can accommodate it. <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a best practices design manual
Ensure that new housing development will not outstrip school, public works, public safety services, and ability of downtown roads to handle suburban traffic.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider phased development ordinance. <input type="checkbox"/> Add adequate facilities/concurrency ordinance. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider impact fees or exactions where development pays for its own services. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider community preservation act, taxing real estate sales.
Implement detailed 2020 Land Use Plan (early draft attached)	<input type="checkbox"/> Revise regulatory structure to move city toward land use plan
Build satellite commercial areas/community centers to create sense of place in less urban areas (e.g. Ward 6).	<input type="checkbox"/> Change zoning for a new neighborhood business area. <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage community centers in buildings, such as schools, already owned by the city.
Create land zoned for new economic development opportunities where it will not harm neighborhoods.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rezone to create new industrial and commercial areas (see land use map)
Encourage development patterns that contribute to, and do not sap, the strength of their neighborhoods.	<input type="checkbox"/> Amend zoning rules to encourage new developments to be linked with existing neighborhoods.
Make sure that all existing buildings are reused and rehabilitated.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Some zoning has been changed to allow for easier reuse of old mill buildings.
Cluster all housing developments in rural areas, leaving more open land, with designs that still allow for housing choices.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Current zoning allows some advantages for developers who cluster houses. <input type="checkbox"/> Revise subdivision rules and regulations
Protect historic buildings defining visual character of downtown.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exploring need for historic district downtown.

While showing a preference to village-type growth, do not preclude homeowners from choosing large lots in suburban areas.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Current zoning allows for large lots in outlying areas.
Make certain the community groups have role in city planning.	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform neighborhood groups of planning issues, as individual abutters are now notified.
Prevent any significant development from sensitive floodplain areas.	<input type="checkbox"/> Revise Special Conservancy zoning and Watershed Protection zoning to prevent development in floodplain areas
Define that portion of Rural Residential zoning that should be rural and preserve the character of that area.	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt zoning that preserves farms and forests, instead of simply calling for larger suburban lots and calling that rural.
Develop site standards for large retail establishments along King Street (or any where else)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopt zoning which encourages buildings to be located closer to the street with parking on the side or rear. <input type="checkbox"/> Require detailing and façade articulation with building projections and recesses for buildings over 100 feet long.
Reduce traffic impacts from new residential development and sprawl	<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate impacts from current residential development patterns, especially development in the Ward 6/Route 66 section of the city.
Address anomalies and inconsistent messages sent in the zoning. Especially coordinate city zoning at town boundaries with that of surrounding towns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rezone parcels on Hatfield town line or near town line that abut commercial or industrial areas in Hatfield to match Hatfield zoning. <input type="checkbox"/> Work with adjoining towns for coordinated zoning. <input type="checkbox"/> Examine pre-existing non-conforming commercial and industrial areas and consider if some of these should be rezoned commercial or industrial.

Significant inconsistencies between vision of traditional development patterns without sprawl and current practices:

- 1) Land use guidance regulations allow but do not especially encourage development patterns consistent with this vision.**
- 2) There is not adequate control to ensure that new development only takes place when adequate facilities are in place to support that development nor to phase development to minimize adverse impacts.**
- 3) Rural residential zoning does not preserve rural character of the city and special conservancy may not be much more effective at preserving floodplains.**

GOAL 8: ENHANCE SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR QUALITY OF LIFE

- Allow for more public gathering spots.
- Ensure public buildings accessible to physically disabled.
- Plan for more community centers.
- Build community by improving communication between groups.
- Better involve public in planning and city government.
- Improve climate of tolerance for differences.
- Build the sense of connectivity between people and their neighborhoods.

Policies, objectives and actions from workshops. Will be expanded during comprehensive planning process.

Policies and objectives to meet goals	Partial list of actions for goals and objectives
	<input type="checkbox"/> To be done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially completed, but can use improvement.
Integrate social services and affordable housing programs with neighborhood concerns. City broker dialogue between social service agencies and neighborhoods.	<input type="checkbox"/> Use CDBG to meet community goals. Integrate CDBG consolidated planning process with city comprehensive planning process. <input type="checkbox"/> Use CDBG process to bring agencies and neighborhoods together.
Increase the city budget for education and recreation for all age groups, including multigenerational activities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work through the School Department for excellence in education. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work with the Recreation Commission and CDBG subrecipients.
Provide more programs for young people and involve youth in decision making.	<input type="checkbox"/> Redesign community leadership structures to include youth as meaningful participants.
Increase cooperation and collaboration among social service agencies	<input type="checkbox"/> Use CDBG process and funding <input type="checkbox"/> Work with social service sector <input type="checkbox"/> Design collaborative programs for families and children that reflect their interests
Improve sense of neighborhood identify	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop network of neighborhood associations covering entire city
Open schools and municipal buildings for public gathering.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lobby School Committee to open school buildings to community, without groups having to pay extra for the use.
Preserve existing entertainment and recreation complexes without harming neighborhoods.	<input type="checkbox"/> Work to make sure Three-County Fairgrounds and Northampton Airport continue to be viable enterprises.

Significant inconsistencies between vision of enhanced facilities and services and current practices:

- 1) Youth issues are not being adequately addressed not so much because of a lack of any specific services but because youth are not integrated into the decision making process.

GOAL 9: PRESERVE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Protect important ecological resources, including surface and groundwater resources, plant communities and wildlife habitat.
- City should take lead in protecting architectural and cultural history.
- Preserve ecological and wildlife linkages, especially water-based linkages.

Policies, objectives and actions from workshops. Will be expanded during comprehensive planning process.

Policies and objectives to meet goals	Partial list of actions for goals and objectives
	<input type="checkbox"/> To be done <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partially completed, but can use improvement.
Improve quality of storm water discharges	<input type="checkbox"/> Improve city discharges as streets and discharges are being rebuild with artificial wetlands and treatment at discharge point <input type="checkbox"/> Use regulations to reduce non-point source pollution
Discourage development in environmentally sensitive areas and encourage environmentally sound development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoning and city infrastructure extension policies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoning, subdivision regulations, city investment, grant investment <input type="checkbox"/> Review zoning restrictions that undermine energy efficient building
Protect valuable ecological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acquire, in fee and by restriction, valuable ecological and open space linkages
Reuse brownfields sites	<input type="checkbox"/> Use property tax and TIFs to encourage reuse of brownfields and previously developed properties.
Provide performance standards to preserve the environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improve performance standards in zoning
Preserve cultural and architectural history	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical Commission should complete an inventory of historic properties <input type="checkbox"/> Inventory of historic properties should be available for review on the Internet and at local libraries. <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Commission should begin acquiring historic preservation restrictions on key buildings. <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Commission should examine new proposals for local historic districts and demolition delay ordinances. <input type="checkbox"/> The city should consider tax incentives to encourage historic preservation.
Maintain clean sidewalks and parks and encourage individuals to clean after themselves and pets.	<input type="checkbox"/> Install plastic bag holders in parks and downtown so dog owners can clean up after their pets.
New acquisitions to city vehicle fleet should include alternative fuel vehicles, such as natural gas, fuel cells, electric.	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Resources Commission/Central Services should work with School Department and DPW to implement.
Provide for quality street trees and streetscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider how to expand street tree program
Provide parking spaces and refueling places for electric vehicles.	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Resources Commission should work with the Parking Commission to implement.

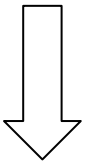
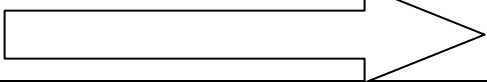
Reduce city dependence on disposable items.

☐ City should purchase products from companies that promote recycling and waste reduction

Significant inconsistencies between vision of preserving natural and cultural resources and current practices:

☐ City storm water discharges need to be rebuilt throughout the city and water quality improvements are needed to those systems.

RELATIONSHIP OF GOALS TO PLAN ELEMENTS

GOALS 	PLAN ELEMENTS 						
	Land use	Housing	Economic development	Natural, cultural resources	Open space and recreation	Services and facilities	Traffic circulation
Vibrant urban centers	♠	♠	♠ ♠	♠	♠	♠	♠
Economic expansion	♠		♠ ♠			♠	
Enhance Residential Neighborhoods and Housing	♠	♠ ♠					♠
Improve transportation services	♠		♠			♠	♠ ♠
Calm traffic	♠	♠				♠	♠ ♠
Expand open space and recreation	♠	♠	♠	♠ ♠	♠ ♠	♠	♠
Preserve village land use; prevent sprawl	♠ ♠	♠	♠	♠	♠	♠	♠

Enhance services promoting quality of life		♠	♠	♠ ♠	♠	♠ ♠	♠
Preserve natural, cultural resources	♠			♠ ♠	♠	♠ ♠	

AREAS WHERE ZONING IS OUTDATED OR DOES NOT PROMOTE 2020 VISION

- Rural Residential zoning does not preserve open space
- Mill River General Industrial areas
- River Run General Industrial
- General Industrial in Bay State Village, encompassing the Cutlery Building
- General Industrial in Leeds, encompassing the old Button Shop
- Ridge Top zoning does not preserve ridge tops
- Hatfield Town Line
- Route 5 (North King Street) south of Interstate 91 exit 21
- Bridge Street business cluster near Post Office
- Outlying areas of Florence Center, especially medical offices on Nonotuck Street

FUTURE STEPS

The comprehensive planning process begins with this document. City officials and community members will engage in a series of public meetings over the next 20 years to animate the visions collected here. The Office of Planning and Development, along with city councilors and other city departments, will spearhead the most intensive public discussion period over the next year. First, the plan is for seven meetings in the seven different political wards across the city. The purpose of the meetings is to

identify any new issues and to focus on primary actions that the city should undertake. The Office of Planning and Development also intends to hold a citywide meeting sometime in the next year with the same intentions as the smaller ward meetings.

Beyond the first year, the steering committee will meet with community members annually in late winter to pore over the vision statement with an eye trained on making sure the goals remain relevant. A major revision session will also be held once every five years. At that meeting, the community will get the chance to rework its vision, making it reflect the new times.

Any future steps should also include our human future: our children, who were the least represented group in the visioning process. The primary strategy for promoting student enthusiasm in community planning will be having an Office of Planning and Development staff member work with a middle school or high school teacher in building class curriculum. Students who take an interest in the curriculum might then be invited to get more involved with the planning process.

APPENDIX A: Background

Introduction and Statement of Purpose

Community Setting---History of Northampton

Jenny Lind did not call this city “paradise” for nothing. The 19th Century diva dubbed Northampton “paradise” after a long stay here, and ever since some residents, with little humility and a dash of boosterism, have decided to keep the moniker, calling the community — “Paradise City.”

For an artist, a gourmand, a bicyclist or a parent, the city just might be paradise. Authors of numerous magazine articles and books have over the last decade named Northampton one of the best places in the country to raise children, ride bicycles, eat out in restaurants and make a life as an artist.

While residents of other communities across the nation might quibble with Northampton’s self embrace of “the best city” in which to raise a child or “the best small arts city,” no one can argue that Northampton is a dominant economic and cultural force in Hampshire County and the middle Pioneer Valley.

Located on the west side of the Connecticut River, the city sits in the valley between that waterway and the old hills to the west. The land nearest the Connecticut River is rich and deep with agricultural history. The soil, though, thins out as the elevation rises, and so does the agriculture.

The city of 35.7 square miles is mid-way between Connecticut and Vermont. It’s also mid-way by automobile between Albany,

N.Y. and Boston.

Northampton has rich natural and human landscapes. Government and various private organizations provide Northampton residents with open space, conservation land, and recreation areas in which to play. The demand, however, for open space and recreation areas outstrips what is available. Open space is dear here for the same reason it is elsewhere: rapid suburban development, escalating land values, and limited municipal financial resources for land purchases.

While its natural neighbors are a river and old hills, its political neighbors are the towns of: Westhampton, Williamsburg, Hatfield and Hadley and the City of Easthampton.

The Connecticut River and its rich floodplains attracted Native Americans to camp and fish along the riverbanks. The agricultural potential also attracted white settlers. They founded Northampton, first known as Nonotuck, in 1654. As Northampton developed, industrial, commercial and institutional sectors surpassed agriculture in economic importance. Farming, though, has not been forgotten. It continues to prosper, especially in the 3,600-acre Connecticut River floodplain. One of its main effects is cultural. The region's people identify with agriculture and perceive themselves as part of an area where farming is indispensable.

Farmers plant large fields of vegetables in the fields along the Connecticut River. Apple orchards also play a significant role in the region's self-perception, if not its economy.

Since the end of World War II, Northampton's economy has changed significantly. The industrial component of the economy, once the linchpin, has contracted. In its place, the commercial and service sectors of the economy have grown.

The city's economy used to be tightly wound around the role of two major institutions, the former Northampton State Hospital and the U.S. Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The state hospital closed in 1994 and the Veterans Hospital has been shrinking for a generation. Smith College, the other large city institution, though, has grown, as has the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Any light pointed at Northampton must first shine downtown. The city's downtown central business district has succeeded where many of its size across the nation have failed. The downtown serves as the cultural and shopping hub of Northampton and attracts tourists, gourmards and residents from surrounding communities. Main Street retail vacancy rates remain low. Even the upper floors of Main Street buildings are largely filled with offices and residences.

Around the country, downtowns in similarly sized communities suffer from inattention, competition, and high commercial vacancy rates. The result is decay. Even in communities with healthy downtowns, success often means a bustling downtown from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. with little evening and weekend activity. This downtown hops day and night, weekdays and weekends.

A large part of downtown's success, however, lies in the ability of shop owners to find market niches that either compete

successfully or avoid direct competition with strip shopping malls, regional shopping malls and e-business. This success has created some problems. For many residents, the "new" downtown does not meet community needs the way the "old" downtown did. To develop a successful market niche, the retail and service sectors have had to define their products differently than in the past, and Northampton has lost many traditional department stores, hardware stores and similar establishments that historically anchored downtown. While this trend is inevitable and is found in most successful central business districts, a valuable element of downtown has been lost. Shoppers find it difficult to buy basic needs downtown, like a spool of thread or a pair of pliers. As a result, local loyalty to downtown is soft among some residents.

Success has meant expansion downtown. Commercial activity has spread out from its Main Street core. Over the past decade, because of the increasing scarcity of affordable downtown first-floor retail space and the shortage of high-quality office space with available parking, a new wave of redevelopment and revitalization has pushed onto nearby Pleasant Street and other commercial areas near Main Street.

The lead role played by Northampton's downtown is not a new one. It has been the leading retail center for Hampshire County over the centuries. It has long served as a regional center and it has traditionally had the largest market share of retail spending. While downtown Northampton remains the most defined urban/retail center in the county, it has a smaller market share of total county retail spending now than in the past and a smaller market share of retail (non-restaurant) spending than the Hampshire Mall in Hadley. Per capita retail and restaurants sales for Northampton are significantly above those sales for Hampshire County and for the Springfield Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The city does pulse beyond Main Street. Vibrant service, commercial, and institutional sectors are found in the city's outlying villages.

Those looking can find a hearty commercial and residential pulse in Florence Center — the center of business and culture for many city residents and the surrounding hilltowns. Florence's "village center," where homes, businesses and industry are all within walking distance of each other, is a highly praised feature of the village. This close physical proximity of homes and businesses produces a neighborliness that makes the village one of the most livable places in the Pioneer Valley.

Florence has a strong identity and character that set it apart from the rest of Northampton. Some would say the village has a healthy "sense of place."

Most of Florence's Main Street retail businesses serve local needs, such as pizza and groceries. Many businesses, however, also serve clients throughout Northampton and the region. Florence's successful village center fills a critical economic and social niche not provided downtown — where rents and density are too high — or on highway strip commercial areas. As in other village centers, Florence's businesses face stiff competition from regional commercial centers and strip commercial areas, such as King Street. Florence Center businesses have maintained a tradition of serving the commercial needs of locals shoppers.

That niche complements other commercial areas, rather than competing with them.

That successful commercial strategy has been used since the 19th century. The center of Florence has served as a commercial center for most of its history. In its earliest days, when Florence was less accessible from Northampton Center, (because of the slow speed of transportation and communication systems) it served local needs and those of travelers on the Boston-Albany Stagecoach Road. The decline of Massachusetts' industrial sector and the rise of competing automobile-oriented commercial areas, however, threatened Florence and caused significant declines for Florence businesses. Today, however, Florence business owners have identified how to serve their core local area market.

Florence Center and surrounding industrial areas host a variety of industrial businesses, mostly in older mill buildings, and medical uses, including Kaiser Permanente and medical offices. As a result, Florence Center has a much greater economic presence than is typical for a small "village center." This helps diversify the economy and culture of the entire city.

Florence's industrial areas are being challenged to face the dramatic change in industrial space demands. Located in multi-story traditional mill buildings, many industries have left for newer more efficient industrial spaces. Because Florence and Northampton are such desirable places to live and work, each time an industry has left Florence creative entrepreneurs have redeveloped the buildings to serve new uses. Those old mill buildings, used in one instance today as studios for artists, used to be at the core of a mill town that produced, among other things, buttons and silk.

Florence Center also includes a significant residential component, including several single room occupancy hotels (SROs) and dense housing developments. The center is surrounded by highly desirable housing in a wide variety of price ranges. Most of this housing was build before World War II and remains in excellent condition.

As Florence's economy developed in the 19th century, its role as a civic and cultural center also grew. In fact, Florence became a center for progressive thinking during the middle of the century. A sort of utopian community developed in the village, attracting visionaries like the former-slave-turned-spiritual-leader Sojourner Truth. The Northampton Association for Education and Industry (1840s), for example, served in Florence as a conduit for progressive ideas on social, political and economic change. Cosmian Hall (1874-1948) served as a cultural center for the city.

Growth and Development Patterns and Population Characteristics

Northampton has a population of approximately 30,000 people, with a population density of 840 people per square mile. The population has remained stable since 1950. While the total population of households has been increasing for the past thirty years, it has been offset by the decrease in the population of mental hospitals.

Major institutions, like Smith College, the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs Medical Center, Clarke School for the Deaf, and the Hampshire County Long-Term Care Facility, affect how many people decide to live here. We expect to see a slight growth in Northampton's population — 2.0 to 2.5% per decade — because the household population keeps growing and no one is leaving the city anymore. The Veterans' Affairs Medical Center has been nearly closed since the early 1990s.

Because of enrollment at Smith College, there are significantly more women than men between the age of 17 and 24. From ages of 25 to 65, there are approximately the same number of men as women. After age 65, women outnumber men, because men suffer from significantly higher mortality rates.

The Age-Sex Distribution graph, or population pyramid, shows that Northampton, like many regions of the country, has an aging population. There are fewer people per age range in the ranges less than 19 than in the ranges between 20 and 44.

Although Northampton's population has not increased significantly, a dramatic decrease in family size has created a corresponding increase in the number of households and, therefore, the number of housing units. While this trend exists in most U.S. communities, the combination of this trend and a major decrease in the number of people living in institutions has fueled most of the last 20 years of residential development.

No figures have been collected on the number of residents without complete mobility or other disabilities. One thing is certain: more people with disabilities are using public facilities because of improved power wheelchairs, more sidewalk curb cuts and an increase in accessible buildings.

The migration rates of people moving into and out of Northampton are high, but in- and out-migrations appear to balance. College-age students contribute to the population turnover, but there is also a significant amount of turnover at other age levels. Sometimes this turnover reduces the sense of a stable neighborhood and residents' commitment to their community, but may also contribute to the vibrancy of Northampton.

Approximately 61% of employed Northampton residents work in Northampton. Most of the remaining 39% of the employed residents commute out of the city, mostly to Amherst and cities and towns in Hamden County. Northampton residents fill slightly over half the jobs in Northampton. (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Journey-to-Work statistics, prepared by P.V.P.C.)

The number of people who live within walking distance of downtown is high for a city the size of Northampton. Approximately 41% of Northampton's population lives within one mile of the center of downtown.

POPULATIONS (AS % OF CITY)

AREA	POPULATION	% OF CITY POPULATION
City of Northampton	29,289	100%
Live within one mile of center of downtown	12,050	41%
Live within one-half mile of center of downtown	6,750	23%
Live in or abutting Central Business District	1,000	3.4%
Florence	6,700	22.9%
Florence Center	1,800	6.1%

(Source: 1990 U.S. Census, with estimates of % of block groups)
 (There may be overlap)

This downtown population, especially with the wide variety of incomes that exist, may be the most important single factor in allowing for a healthy downtown. This population provides a base of customers for downtown businesses and helps provide the vibrancy that is critical to the health of downtown. It also generates a need for a variety of housing types and opportunities.

There are a wide variety of incomes and housing stock in the downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods. Downtown also has a much higher proportion of rental units than the rest of Northampton.

RENTAL HOUSING (AS % ALL UNITS)

City of Northampton	48.6%
Within 1 mile of CBD center	68.4%
Within 1/2 mile of CBD center	80.8%

(Source: 1990 U.S. Census. The presence of Smith College does skew these figures. These figures include all Smith College and private rental housing **except dormitories**.)

ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**Geology, Soils, Topography and Landscape/Village Character**

The terrain of Northampton ranges from the flat, alluvial Mill and Connecticut River floodplains to the moderately steep hills in the western and northern edges. The hills are often shallow to ledge with soils and topography poorly suited for development. Most

development in Northampton has occurred in the areas above the floodplain and below the steeper hills. Although Northampton looks "built-out" from most of the roads, the majority of the city's land area is "back" land that has not been developed.

Most of the city's development occurred in a corridor along the Mill River and the flatter sections of the city northeast of the Mill River. Downtown Northampton, Bay State, Florence, and Leeds are all located within one mile of the historical Mill River (in 1939 the Mill River was diverted from downtown to control floods).

Most non-agricultural development avoided the Connecticut River floodplain because of the potential for flood damage. During the last two or three decades the agricultural economy of Massachusetts has declined, resulting in the loss of some marginal farms, both in and out of the floodplain.

Today, the pattern of developing along the Northampton-Florence-Leeds corridor and rural areas outside the corridor remains. Since World War II, however, much of the previously rural areas have been transformed to strip and suburban development. Commercial development has spread from the original Northampton-Florence corridor to include extensive strip and shopping plaza development on King Street and North King Street. Industrial uses in the Northampton-Florence-Leeds corridor, and especially along the Mill River, have shrunk. That industrial contraction has been offset, in part, by industrial development in the Northampton Industrial Park. Residential development has also changed. Suburban development transformed the Ryan Road, Burts Pit Road, Florence Road, Westhampton Road areas; apartment complexes built north of downtown changed that area; and scattered housing in every corner of Northampton has few places open.

Even with the changes, clear lines still exist between urban, "small town," suburban, and rural areas. Northampton remains a city with a strong sense of both community and place. This urban development pattern has in large and small ways been shaped by the strength of the urban centers of Northampton and Florence, the King Street shopping areas, the residential neighborhoods, and the existence of large tracts of public and quasi-public land, including the Northampton State Hospital, Smith College, Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Smith Vocational and Agricultural School, Look Memorial Park, Northampton Reservoir watershed lands, and the Veteran's Administration Medical Center.

Northampton's land is a three-part geological story. There is the floodplain, then the deep, flat glacial outwash and rolling glacial till in the areas where most development has occurred and then the steeply sloping glacial till in the hills on the north and western ends of town. Elevations range from 99 feet mean sea level (M.S.L.) on the Connecticut River to 890 feet M.S.L. in the hills in the western side of town.

The USDA Soil Conservation Service lists three generalized soil types for Northampton:

1. Hadley-Winooski-Limerick Association: Deep, nearly level, well drained, moderately well drained, and poorly drained, loamy soils formed in alluvial material; on floodplains.

2. Hinckley-Merrimac-Windsor Association: Deep nearly level to steep, excessively drained and somewhat excessively drained, sandy and loamy soils formed in outwash deposits; on outwash plains.
3. Charlton-Paxton-Woodbridge Association: Deep, level to steep, well and moderately well drained, loamy soils formed in glacial till; on uplands.

To the southeast of Northampton are the Mt. Tom and the Holyoke mountain ranges, running in a unique east/west fashion. These mountains restrain the northerly expansion of the Springfield-Chicopee-Holyoke metropolitan area while helping to define the Northampton area and Hampshire County.

Water Resources

Northampton water resources include open water bodies, wetlands, floodplain, and drinking water supply aquifers and watersheds. These water resources are all sensitive ecological resources, but they also provide some of the best agricultural, forest, open space, scenic, recreation, and wildlife habitat resources.

Water Resource Type	Acreage
WATER BODIES (rivers, streams, ponds)	1,200 acres
FLOODPLAIN (100 year flood)	4,800 acres
WETLANDS (swamps, marshes)	not completely mapped
DRINKING WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS AND AQUIFERS	5,000 acres (includes water and wetlands)

Northampton's primary water supply comes from the Francis P. Ryan Reservoir Complex in Whately and the Mountain Street Reservoir in Williamsburg. The city's aquifer in Florence, with one well on Clark Avenue and one off Spring Street, provides approximately 15 percent of Northampton's water supply. The Leeds/Roberts Meadow Reservoir complex provides an emergency water supply. Part of Hatfield's aquifer is in the Broad Brook area of Northampton.

Although never as polluted as the section of the river below the Holyoke Dam, the water quality in the Connecticut River in Northampton has improved since 1972, when the federal Clean Water Act was passed. Improved sewage treatment plants, expansion of areas served by sanitary sewers, and ending of combined sanitary and storm water sewers (CSOs), have combined to improve water quality in the Connecticut River and Mill River. Northampton's Hockanum Road waste water treatment plant was upgraded to secondary treatment in the early 1980s and currently services 85-90 percent of Northampton

houses. There have been some improvements in pollution from rain runoff. That source, though, remains the most significant threat to water quality.

Vegetation and Fisheries and Wildlife

Northampton has diverse natural habitats that support a variety of plants and animals. Approximately 50 percent of Northampton is a mixed deciduous forest, including oak, maple, beech, with smaller coniferous forests, including spruce, pine and hemlock. Several thousand more acres of land are used for agriculture or are abandoned fields and wet meadows.

Deer, bear and other mammals thrive in the woodland and forest edge, especially in the northern and western sides of Northampton. Game birds, such as pheasants, ruffed grouse (partridge), woodcock, and turkey, are present in large numbers. Trappers also know that raccoons, muskrats and fox are abundant. For several years there have been increases in the numbers of otter and opossum, plus an explosion of beaver. Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, which conducts detailed biological assessments and bird counts, has counted upwards of 200 species of birds in or passing through the sanctuary, including the Bald Eagle, Redtail Hawk, and Screech Owl.

The various lakes, streams and rivers in Northampton provide environments for a variety of fish, such as trout, salmon, bass, pickerel, northern pike, shad and walleye. The Connecticut River, the Ox-Bow, and the Mill River in the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary are especially significant aquatic habitats.

Although Northampton has diverse plant and animal habitats, the habitat is not as productive as it once was. Like most areas in New England, wetlands were filled or drained to allow development, prior to federal and state wetlands protection acts. Even with those acts, small amounts of wetlands, especially isolated wetlands continue to be lost or degraded because of nearby development.

As development extends up valley corridors and increasingly up hillsides, wildlife habitats are being fragmented. Although this fragmentation is not as serious as in many urban areas, it is degrading the range and productivity of the flora and fauna in those habitats.

In 1993 the Conservation Commission hired a trained naturalist to do an ecological assessment of the Conservation Commission's properties, the lands abutting those properties, and several other sensitive sites. This information, including "Rediscovering Northampton, The Natural History of City-Owned Conservation Areas" was collected to provide greater data with which to make land management and land acquisition decisions. Much of this information has been incorporated into this plan.

Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Expanding on the DEM Scenic Landscape Inventory, significant scenic resources and unique environments were mapped for Northampton. These resources include the notable "viewsheds," or vistas, from public roads, water bodies, and permanently protected open space. The assessment also shows historic districts. Known archaeological sites are **not** shown on this map in order to protect them.

As development occurs, especially development with little sensitivity to the community's views, some scenic views are being lost. In addition, as farmland has been abandoned, closed forests are replacing formerly pastoral views.

Environmental Problems

Much of Northampton has sensitive ecological resources, especially the water resources such as wetlands, streams, floodplain, and drinking water aquifers and watersheds. Much of the richest wildlife habitat in Northampton is at some risk, and some surface water and wetland resources are slowly being degraded. This occurs for the obvious reasons: Wildlife habitat is converted to urban and suburban land, and development cuts into ranges and habitat types.

This loss of habitat and natural flood buffering areas is Northampton's most serious environmental problem. Storm water and snow melt runoff laden with pollutants also poses significant water quality problems.

Over the past 40 years, tougher environmental rules and policies, including separation of combined sanitary and storm sewers, construction and expansion of the waste water treatment plant, pretreatment standards for sanitary waste, lined landfills, wetlands regulations, erosion control standards, and improved forest management practices, have all softened the impacts of development on natural and ecological resources. Air pollution continues to present a health hazard, especially during the summer months, to Northampton and the Pioneer Valley. During the summer, ozone pollution builds up and blows in from the south. The pollution levels far exceed federal ozone standards.

APPENDIX B: Visioning Process and Public Comments:

The Northampton Vision 2020 process was kicked off on February 6, 1999, when 250 people (including 25 facilitators) participated in an all-day community workshop at Northampton High School. More people, some new and some who attended the all-day workshop, attended a series of seven follow-up workshops. At these more intimate workshops, an average of 25 people attended. Most of the time was spent in small group discussions, the results of which were briefly presented to the entire workshop by representatives of each small group.

A total of nine workshops were held:	
All-day community visioning (at High School)	250 people
Florence center plan follow-up workshop	27 people
Downtown plan follow-up workshop	23 people
Open Space and Recreation plan follow-up workshop	27 people
Priority setting workshop (at Ryan Road)	14 people
Priority setting workshop (at Bridge Street)	27 people
Priority setting workshop (at Leeds)	23 people
Priority setting for business community (Chamber sponsored)	46 people
Final summary and feedback workshop	48 people

(Some people attended more than one workshop and/or filled out a questionnaire, so these numbers cannot be added up to identify total community participation.)

In addition, approximately 270 questionnaires, email, letters or other written communication was received.

Workshop, questionnaire, and correspondence raw data

Job Creation and Economic Development

***Promote and protect independent local and small businesses, to the extent they are viable.

Concerned about modular business

Limit economic development/businesses to small, quiet, compatible with rural character, with heavier industry in one place

Keep out chains

Downtown thriving, but money does not come back to schools, neighborhoods, and art

***Stop exodus of industry, accommodate and create positive atmosphere

***Development should not harm existing business areas or infringe on neighborhoods

Development behind Yankee condominiums is a concern

Over-development is a threat to open space, trees, and nature

**State Hospital as an opportunity for development, but questions about what type

***Low pay, high tax rate –this combination creates pressure for infrastructure

***Maintain current population so we don't increase burden on city services

**Northampton is nice as is—keep doing what we have been doing

Address perceived conflict between community of “rich folks” and diversity of people and housing

Strength: specialty/diverse businesses, integrate diversity into planning

Business rent control, more businesses on side streets

**losing commercial/industrial, and especially blue-collar jobs

***Concern for turning into a “tourist town”

***require sweat equity and community service for affordable housing*

Control issues : Permit alterations & Types of businesses

Ok to put shelter downtown – easy access

- ***Expand mixed residential and commercial areas, while preserving residential areas from adverse impacts of development and including mixed-income housing
- Expense of crafts people in old buildings
- Encourage preservation of historic resources through incentives
- Identify highway scenic routes to get state money without rules
 - Need more and better paying jobs, not just more service sector jobs
- 221 Pine St. building- problem- could expand with new business
 - ***encourage some industrial commercial growth (Florence)
- ***Monitor growth- impact on schools, traffic control/ limit growth**
- Residential grow vs. industrial comm. (Florence)**
- **Planned growth, promote village cluster growth not suburbs
- ENFORCE BUILDING CODES**
- Improve: Chestnut medical building, Casket building (emissions), Cold Pepsi Plant
- *Pulaski Park (big tree), ****Upper King St. (dead space, empty buildings, ugly, keep fast food there), **Ryan Rd. area, ***Route 9 and Bridge (and Hadley)
- Will Yankee Plastics Building remain? Turn down?**
- ***Market community to promote the village business**
- Limit industrial expansion
- **Downtown pedestrian mall
- More downtown office space development

Housing and Neighborhoods

- More publicity for ability to in-fill housing
- Keep suburban sprawl - trophy homes -out
- Respect neighborhood privacy
- Plan to address growth on the outskirts - road improvements already impacting
- ***Protect downtown historic district-- preserve older buildings and unique architecture
- Want larger lots
- **Need more community outreach and participation, e.g. neighborhood councils, tenant associations
- Need for accessible community gathering and continuing adult education space
- Mixed development in same building in downtown
- Zoning that allows for small housing to be on small plots
- *Homeless shelter, Attention to homeless
- Better match between housing cost and workers salaries within city
 - Need fewer Large lot single families / clusters of single families/ Indep. living houses
- Increase density, In-fill, Look to potentially developable areas
- Creative housing selections, Increase housing for elders, Quality of housing (rent – war)
- Need rentals of 3-4 bedrooms which is very minimal in Northampton
- Generate pockets of neighborhoods to give city wide balance
- (8) Find ways to promote more affordable housing that doesn't look "low cost"
- Subsidized housing, Displacement of subsidized tenants

*****Provide more diverse housing options**

Leeds- senior housing opportunity (intergenerational housing?)

More rental options needed—3+ bedroom houses, studio, small business, and apartments

*****Increase affordability of housing, including:**

Small affordable housing units scattered through out the city, not big projects

More mixed-use housing with mix of incomes and affordability component

Housing for young couples and the elderly

Provide subsidies to encourage owner-occupied units

Affordable rental units

Ensure low and middle class income housing with more in-fill and density in some areas

*****Co-housing clustered site with more green space**

*****high-density housing SRO's downtown could endanger econ. dev. and neighborhood**

Owner occupied ----- rented/surrounded by institutions

*****Create a neighborhood agenda**

*****Reuse existing structures don't demolish, pro-active regulations, design control/ incentives**

Need broader use of housing rehabilitation funds

****Housing types by individual neighborhood, Want to see brick row houses turned over**

Encourage more home ownership and its resulting community stability

Need to strengthen city/non-profit housing partnership

*****Improve communication between residents and human service agencies**

*****Improve use of community policing in neighborhoods**

*****Develop mixed – use buffer zoning**

*****Around the core downtown (lower Main St.)dog poop- need to be enforced**

*****More visible police at night, Feel safe but Not by the arch—RR tracks up by Depot**

Housing- shortage- allow for growth- need more \$ increase- where to sprawl to

****Leeds keep rural feeling- maybe central downtown Florence expand**

Work to create village feel-benches, trees

****Improve ways for neighborhoods to communicate**

Traffic and Circulation

*****More downtown parking needed (need another downtown parking garage)**

Need to improve: **Round Hill Rd. (too many student cars)

Bridge Rd. (too many trucks, too much speeding)

Hawley Street/Northampton Post Office gateway to downtown.

Barret St. Marsh (underutilized space)

Pull St. Hospital traffic off West St. to downtown

Mini-van shuttle service from State Hospital development to downtown

Revise intersection at Elm St. and West St. by Smith gate and South/State/Main and

Old South and Main

Public transport needs expansion off #9 and #5 elderly and disabled

Reroute traffic around city, perhaps on a new Route 9 or a Route 9 truck route, while maintaining shopping activity

Look at providing alternatives to car route, including better buses, light rail, trolleys

Route 10 needs better access to State Hospital Development

Create access from North King over 91 to river's edge, Expansion of 66

- ***Expand bike paths and linkages to all surrounding communities, all neighborhoods and along both rivers

Create car free downtown with no more parking garages and public transit to other areas Enforce Handicapped parking

Improve pedestrian and bike only paths (with more parking by the paths)

- ***Provide bike racks throughout the community
- **Another Conn. River bridge
- *Fort bridge over river to connect with St. Hospital land
- *Expanded discussion at traffic patterns through Florence
- *Encourage more pedestrian traffic in neighborhoods and downtown
- **maintain and increase bike, pedestrian, and bus access to town and within town

Especially in winter residents are not given much flexibility of places to park

Keep cars behind buildings

- *Plow bike paths

More Public/Alternative transportation - less emphasis on auto traffic

- *Shuttle buses from outlying parking lots, Bike-ways, Yellow bikes of Austin, Carless street downtown, carpooling

Promote alternatives to driving to increase interaction in neighborhoods

Address transportation needs without more highway improvements, provide alternative means

Smith needs to develop their parking garage and improve their parking system

Provide long term garage for downtown residents

New buildings downtown should provide parks

Encourage bicycles-wider route on bridge, more bike racks/lanes downtown

Dangerous intersections

- ***Calm traffic and traffic speeds

Allow on-street parking.

Do not widen roads, *Better traffic planning

- *Conflict between local desires and federal/state construction specifications
- ***Need better traffic enforcement, especially in pedestrian areas

Crosswalks have improved in Leeds but still a concern for kids

Bridge Rd., Elm St., and Nonotuck St. are problem areas

Improved infrastructure

- **Like four-way stop signs, like at Burt's Pit Rd.—need more (some opposition to this)

Enforce snow clearance laws in commercial areas

Better info. regarding Coolidge Bridge construction

Encourage park & rides, carpooling

Route 66 left turn, by Smith College, is dangerous

- **Make traffic signals easier to understand

Pedestrian crossing at Academy of Music is very poor, unsafe

Bridge St. and King St. are much improved, as is off Elm St. past Cooley Dickenson

City should look at transportation and educate public as part of this program

- *****If we don't increase parking, give other options—no meters in Northampton and Florence**

Bikes should be encouraged as the preferred means of getting around with free bikes, safe places to lock up bikes, and connecting bike paths through downtown and Look Park

King Street needs improved pedestrian crossings and sidewalks and fewer curb cuts

**Require parks and residential components for large development
 Improve marking and paint of crosswalks (especially Florence, King Street, Pleasant St.)
 ***Improve public transit, including loop through downtown Northampton, greater bus frequency, better information, marked bus stops
 Enforce existing parking regulations – enforcement is not a problem, just monitor
 beyond meters downtown – into residential space
 Need paving and parking regulations
 Need more information signs for parking
 Encourage pedestrian traffic vs. mole parking through traffic (close streets)
 Use chamber to educate people from out of town about parking and pedestrian Traffic
 Consider overhead crosswalk for pedestrians, Better system for walking, Elder transport on sidewalks
 Consider underground travel for autos
 Cut off traffic to some areas downtown- RT 10 to King- Main St- put green there like
 Boulder, Make Main street greener with benches, (14) Treebelt – fewer cars, widen sidewalk on Main Street, Traffic free Main St.
 Link with how to get around and aesthetics- fewer cars enhances uniqueness
 Alley ways- really use them- celebrate
 King to Rt.9- short streets- roar through near Dunkin' Donuts- signage- speed bumps
 to slow folk down (Industrial Park good example)/lower speed limit
 Sidewalks – Damon Rd/ King St.
 Right turn on red light
 Bike path cleared of snow trash- containers- no dumping snow
 No motor vehicle on bike path
 Find out effect of through traffic on commerce
 Enforcement of speed laws on bridge road and everywhere
 Improve traffic flow through center would relieve traffic on side streets, “Ring system” to pull traffic from downtown
 Community parking lot close to center
 Not have a road that goes through the community gardens
 Keep State hospital open to walking- not just apartment complexes for private use
 Need committee to look at road development- environmental issues, bike paths,
 pedestrian way(6) Roads can be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly
 More walking encourages safety, Walk to work
 Parking become tight but need to ID parking that is public P.O. lot everybody's I
 Route 9 bypass around Florence North of Fitzgerald Lake? Into Rove 5
 Better pedestrian access from Florence Rd. neighborhoods
 Maintain free parking in Florence
 Sign at N Maple and bridge and light
 Keep Florence village feel – old style lights
 Slow down traffic in Florence

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL

Citywide effort to set up trust's to oversee and manage conservation areas
 Art school
 Clean up/preserve side of river
 Mill river corridor- walkway through Paradise pond & cut through Look park

Look park should provide entertainment as well as walking space

State Hospital – wetlands habitat for cutley(?)

CONSERVATION AND GREENWAYS ACQUISITION

**** Continued expansion of the Fitzgerald Lake area and North of Laurel Park

***** Connect City's wild areas with wildlife corridors

Bassett Brook

** Activate the Smith School prop. at the Vets Hosp. as tree farm for city

**** Acquisition of Saw Mill Hills (Ryan Rd./Sylvester Road area)

*** Acquisition of mineral – 2000 acres leading to Easthampton

* Acquisition of Park Hill Agricultural property

*** Protection of wildlife corridors into the City from surrounding towns

* Gather data on where wildlife does travel in the City

*** Preserve green space at Hospital rather than development

***** Locate more in town green space, Preserve green/open space

BIKE PATHS AND RAIL TRAILS

***Have bike lanes on roadways vs. rail trails

Improve mobility on bikes

***Bad location for proposal bike path along Mill River. Should preserve this area

*** Better bike path maintenance

***** Bike Paths-- Protect vista view, beautify, better maintenance, Develop winter use, Create hard pack rather than paved paths, finish connecting, extend to surrounding towns, lanes in town

*Concern for using area along Mill River in Leeds for bike path—reduce tranquility

Protect area along Mill River and Beaver Brook/Mill river- save village character and share with others/ Preserve Mill River area with benches-walking trails

**Controlling use of lands by dirt bikes and snow mobiles

**Limit paving in park areas

***Green corridors connecting to create “necklace” for extended walking/ hiking

***Protecting “hilltops” from development—purchase or regulator

***Play area for kids—soccer, skating, playing fields (the fairgrounds?)

***City should purchase more open and green spaces

**Regulations should allow for preservation of open spaces when development occurs

Invite “recreation” and informed use in Meadows (causes damage?)

**State Hospital—Balanced plan to bring industry

***City should buy land abutting the river, but clean riverbank

***Access to the river—bike trails

Connect to larger greenway system

Cluster development makes transportation more efficient and preserves open space

Like parks in the city, they are well-maintained by all

Propose that city land is used/not limited to certain departments and restricted to others—it should be used for its most appropriate use

**Preserve the Meadows and farmland from development

Need another downtown green space, e.g. old Mill River bed area

Pulaski park – more village green enclosed by buildings – focal point – make like a common

Village green in Bay State Center

Trees- overall- old- won't last long- Summer St. Tree planting want forest trees

Pocket parks- small neighborhoods be interested in their own

Not much space in village for growth, it's small

Remaining open space near Barrett St.

**Look park to Hospital grounds green

Old quarry off King St.

**Consciousness about wild life movement

**Containing already developed

***Bridge over Mill River to Hospital ground

More grounds Ryan School

**Conservation land kept wild- not too much access

**Bike path on roads being rebuilt (keep trees)- Ryan Rd., Burts Put(???), Rt.66, Rt.9

concern about infill-development

Need something like a tot lot in Crosby St., by Industrial Park- ¼ acre

Board walks on swampland

**Put a tight grip on open spaces- use need trees- hiking trails- etc

**Private land- landowners can make decisions- should city make plans to fund the purchase of these areas

Parking issues at rail trail- need parking

VA hospital space- golf course and arts center

Maybe government health program

Zoning issues- maybe have to revise

Community services in Look Park with center with Arts Council and PTO's

LAND MANAGEMENT

***Provide funds for current conservation and recreation land- signs, trails, supervision

Control for invasive plants

***Do not allow buildings on ridgeline through zoning

***Keep agricultural land as agriculture- not change to recreation

PROGRAMMATIC (PRIMARILY RECREATION)

School properties/ facilities being utilized by community on evenings and weekends

Look park fees becoming too expensive for locals. Provide discount for locals.

Season passes for locals

More citizen input in management of Look Park (e.g. more community members on board)

MANAGE PROGRAMS TO ATTRACT LOCALS VS. SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

* Open all City schools on nights and weekends, open for more recreation

Create more multi-use of the Fair Grounds

Remove the wooden play structure at Jackson Street School

*****Create more recreation areas in wards throughout the City, maintain existing ones- Build skate board park, ice skating, more lighted recreation fields, more swim options, reconstruct/create more tennis courts

*** Better enforcement of the City's leash law or establish a dog park

* Institute summer playground programs in neighborhoods

RECREATION, NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, TOT LOTS ETC.

- ** Locate more community garden plots (and bird sanctuaries) throughout the City
- Montview Rd – acquire a 4 acre plot for a community garden location
- * Locate defined areas for hunting in the City
- Develop Keyes field as park in Florence
- **** Survey neighborhoods throughout the City to identify potential open space areas
- ** Discuss lot size averaging
- *** Preserve all views of the Holyoke Range
- Sheldon field- Do not develop as a Park and Ride
- Airport grandfathered for entertainment uses
- Basketball hoops for Sheldon fields
- School properties should allow more uses for recreation (including adult activities). Accommodate youth activities with existing school property
- Youth should feel like they are part of downtown, youth community center needed
- Community gardens- Burts Pit Rd.- expand this area/ use state hospital for these Gardens
- Meadow off Rd.66- maintained as open space (area just down from monuments) not paved for parking
- Save property along Sylvester Rd.
- Save grand historic trees on State Hospital

CONSERVATION AND GREENWAYS ACQUISITION

- Fitzgerald Lake- increase area
- Expand existing areas- create large areas for sake of wild life
- Access to greenways and conservation areas from urban areas, especially Mill River
- Preserve pristine areas
- Florence needs central park/ common- ATM space perfect on space in front of old Bookends
- **Keep the cows at Smith voc.
- **No homeless shelter at bike path
- **Keep green space downtown/ green space behind bank
- Center situated Florence Ctr. Park
- ***Maintain bike path – clean it regularly

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

- Health Care- Health care from schools, clinic in Caldor Plaza, comm health care ctr's-work with social/health, More senior health services and residential (VA), public health nurse*
- Forbes library (needs Sunday and other increased hours), need small branch libraries
- Residential facilities for mentally ill at State Hospital
- Outdoor educational facility at Turkey Hill
- Homelessness, food pantry need
- Explore alternatives housing and transportation for elderly
- City unions without contracts (morale concern)
- Local neighborhood schools
- *Encourage participation and outreach, Neighborhood councils
- More adult programs

Youth – center or programs, Structured alternatives, youth congestion downtown, *Teen center run by teens, Entrepreneurship for youth, Needing forums for teens- respect for young people, Need structured alternative for teens, business and teens can work together
 Barter/community dollars program
 Maintain what we have including infrastructure Academy of Music, Arts Center
 New Police station downtown
 Social clinics -Mental health needs
 Concern over Drug increase for teens
 Integrate services/ sharing care networks etc, Maintain diversity
 Public gathering spaces: community meetings and Community center
 Money to staff and supply schools for quality education/ Look for creative ways to cut cost in education, i.e. improve education and physical aspect of schools
 Override for operating costs
 Information center for tapping available “people resources”
 Flight to charter and private schools must stop
 Neighborhood schools are important to some (adults)
 Need public access to schools for adults
 Simplify use of city resources—its public use but treat it as departments???
 Encourage multi-use buildings—afford to keep them open, not just vacant school buildings Reuse vacant public buildings for uses that may not be for community services
 Schools should be center for community and social services, open for recreation
 Conflict with school system depends on where you live—class rooms too big, teachers’ pay too low, Must have schools that appeal to a variety of users
 Strengths: integrated preschools and Head Start programs in high schools
 Services, located in one place, for people who are in transition (down-sized, jobless, etc.) and need guidance
 Small neighborhood schools—parents are more involved
 Satellite senior centers
 Nothing for teens to do in Leeds, Kids needs, hanging out, talking, place to be invited
 concerns with homeless: Homeless shelter at the State Hospital—year round shelter with greater opportunity for people to be productive and work—farming and land management vs. downtown environment
 VA, college campuses, and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame
 No social services in Ward 3
 Use college interns to develop “directories” of information
 Have “community service” function at police department
 More shelters for bus riders
 Need to have a community center (like Bangs)in downtown/cultural events – on a bus route/ Encourage downtown cultural events
 More restrooms and phones(by academy) and bike racks
 Have a multicultural nature center for New Americans – actual place
 Keep recreational area going in winter- flood and skating on a field for instance- including play areas, Need skateboard park in the city
 Deal with conflict between school department and recreation department- use of Facilities
 Facilitator wish: conserve 50 Jackson St.
 Development of Department of parks and recreation (together)- all year long under one management
 Maybe a theater in Florence or Leeds
Use South Hadley model- Book Store/ shops for Florence
Pikes theater at Look Park- step up with crowd and attend dance(???)

Need to walk to services

Arts festival like taste of Northampton

Discourage chain stores or limit size

Encourage arts, Have artisans have 1 or 2 times a year an open house

Other

Build underground

Price Chopper redevelopment

Expand variety of materials that can be recycled

Control trees, Lack of trees in commercial districts

Tension of historic district and multiple regulations – tax incentives

Mixed use done sensitivity – hard to decide

Have to integrate historic- with strip on King and Pleasant Street

Most of the forces for change are beyond our control

People should shop in village- need stores that draw vs. stores that serve

Florence should compliment downtown Northampton and King Street

Parson's Brook and surrounding

No way to interact with highway department now- about environmental issues

Not always better, different- need long range plans for \$ education

Watch trends # students

Festival or event to draw people to Florence

Bring generation together

Need to have people in area step forward to work to get what you want

Florence- should not have more than our fair share, difference opinion on current share- don't encourage more

Florence Sign design review

FAVORITE PLACES

***Open Space, Recreation, and Parks

***Child's Park

***Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area

***State Hospital (including sledding hills)

***River, including Oxbow, but needs public park

***Look Park, but difficult to get in – sledding, tennis, kids

***Arcadia Wildlife

***Meadows

*Barret St. Marsh

*Maine's Field

Pocket parks

Leeds reservoir

Pulaski Park

House Mountain area

****Rail Trail/Bike Path

***Smith College (Library, Fort Hill, Mill River, Paradise Pond, Greenhouse)

***Downtown Northampton (Main St, Forbes Library, local businesses, esp. State St Fruit Store, Serios, Farmer's Market, Raven Used Books)
 Academy of Music, Calvin, Fire and Water, Artist's Galleries
 Old Fire Station
 ***Special character
 South St./ West St./ State St. (Skate board?)/ Elm St.
 Restaurants/ Ice cream places
 *Airport
 Clark School
 Area around cement factory at Hatfield/N. Elm
 Jackson St School and housing complexes
 American Legion
 PVT
 Mary Brown's
 **Smith Vocational Farm
 Clement St. Bridge
 YMCA
 Junkyard
 ***Community gardens
 Baystate Commercial, especially Smitty's and Cutlery area
 *Florence Diner
 ***Lily Library
 *Cooper's Corner
 Florence Post Office

 ***Unique neighborhoods
 Like self sufficient villages
 Like Leeds, Bay state etc.
How do you define your neighborhood?
 ***Based on where you walk, Sense of community through walking distance and events like parades **Houses in your area, What you see out your front and back doors
 ***Where you feel comfortable and connected, ***Who you interact with, Variable and personal
 Length of kids tether
 History
 *Village association
 Evolution of neighborhood concept based on development of new areas (state hospital)
 Changes (school closing) brings a neighborhood together
 Schools, Temple
 **Whole town is your neighborhood
 Neighborhood concept is transitioning from physical to social/work connections
Locally owned businesses
 *State hospital was/is? in everyone's neighborhood
 There are neighborhoods within neighborhoods that are linked by desire and/or need
 Surrounding open spaces, Bike path

Unique and special local qualities
Marginal/fragile neighborhood (downtown)
Physical neighborhood is a larger area whereas faces define human neighborhood
***By shared values, community work, and solidarity, defined by the activities you do
Crisis brings a neighborhood together
Mix of apartments and single-family houses
Need time to spend where you live and interact with neighbors
Friendly cohesive, easily defined neighborhoods have been built up in cul-de-sacs, but
Throughways and access roads have lost out

FAVORITE QUALITIES OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND TOWN

**Progressive City
Dogs and cats
Diagonal parking downtown
****“college town”
***Very special sense of pride and sense of community, closeness, sense of permanence
***Village feel (for others college-town feel)
Hearing kids playing in Park school
Great for young families
***Sense of safety and tolerance, including safe to walk around at night
**General quality of life, Ease of living/convenience of laundry, public transport
Cul-de-sacs
School as meeting place
Quality of safety services and infrastructure
*****Historical/cultural heritage/ Historic structures/architectural beauty
***Mixed use within walking distance (residential, business, open space), Vibrant pedestrian culture, Pedestrian/walkable friendly
***Don't have to use car
Ecological atmosphere
***Mixture of housing types, Mix of rentals and family housing
***Economic diversity- Proper mix of business, Small businesses, Diversity of professions
***Social diversity, mix of age groups with lots of young people, integrated neighborhoods
Living wage jobs, Work-able
Honor Court
Artist spaces, Strength of arts in community, *Libraries, arts, ***Arts and industry mix
****Open space kind of city, ***Close natural areas, *****Rural character, Scenic vistas, Night sky, Privacy in woods, Large trees, Nice view across
Pulaski Park
Natural paths link neighborhood
Remaining farms/New England character
Quiet, See and hear everything
Businesses are attractive and friendly
Centrally located schools
***Unique mix of rural and downtown—best of both worlds
Education is a big industry

*Geography-proximity, suburban, rural, city, college- Amount of spaces between houses
 Urban and close to Boston, Central location
 ***Sense of diversity and tolerance and acceptance for lifestyle differences (e.g. gay and lesbian community)
 ****Vibrant and alive downtown
 **Great building restoration and reuse (Academy of Music, Calvin, Community Music School, Thorne's Performance Space)
 Great and varied restaurants and ice cream
 Teen center in Florence
 Group clean ups of rural areas

BIGGEST DRAWBACKS OF NEIGHBORHOOD

***Lack of Functional downtown stores (hardware, department stores etc.)
 ***Lack of Parking in Northampton
 ***Traffic (including neighborhood streets, e.g. Williams St and Pine St., as short cuts)
 ***Lack of affordable and decent housing
 ***Development of affordable housing should be encouraged
 ***Concerned about development of State Hospital
 *Concerned with environment along river
 *Concerned about crime, especially at night and in neighborhoods
 Pleasant St.- lacks of open spaces, you have walk up Elm St./Smith College
 **Buildings not accessible
 ****Too many big trucks in town, Dumpsters at 6am, trains, in front of Barts
 Too much college noise, traffic, parties, lack of parking around Smith****
 Tracks are not well maintained
 Prospect St. and Elm St. are barriers, Prospect St. too wide to cross
 People getting squeezed in - need to zone smaller lots
 Increased cost of real estate, *Anxiety about over-development
 **Poor school quality
 Sidewalks and crosswalks not kept clear
 * Dogs not cleaned-up after, Dog control and dog barking
 Diagonal parking and Bike lanes on streets are dangerous
 *Main St. has separated from rest of town
 ****Lack of diversity in town, Too homogeneous, ***Mix income levels
 ****Too many speeding cars, Speed of cars and fatalities in more rural areas
 *Animals- coyotes, skunks, feral cats, beavers, rabid raccoons, Cat shelter
 Quality of safety services and infrastructure, **Need more infrastructure
 *Concerns with loss of open space, ***Need to protect open space
 Concerns with growing high speed rail or gambling casinos
 Need standing parking places in front of video stores, dry cleaners
 There is resistance to change in neighborhoods
 ***Need better public transportation(more frequently)
 **Concern for air quality, water quality, level of pesticides
 Use bike paths for light rails/ mono rails, Need curfew for bike path
 Prohibitions against home businesses

*Concerned about homelessness and other disenfranchised people
 Sense of neighborhood lost with loss of neighborhood schools/ Strengthen village association
 ***Need to be more pedestrian friendly with more and better sidewalks.
 *Need better upkeep of roads/**Concern with snow removal
 ***Need more community centers, ***Need more youth centers(accessible near town)
 ***Need better community/police relations and more community policing
 ***Need more free activities for all
 *Need to include young people in planning and funding and addressing their needs
 Need better transportation for elders
 *Need for more age/racial/ethnic/family/economic integration across the city
 Co-housing model expanded/ Need more rental opportunities
 Vocational school more community connected
 Need to preserve physical beauty/*Need small pocket parks and community gardens
 Many don't feel welcome in downtown
 Safe for middle age but not safe for teens
 Focus growth in currently used areas
 Neighborhoods are very small
 Concern about empty Caldor center
 Need more funding for public arts
 Schools need huge funding, Need more for children
 More transportation
 Round Hill Rd. student parking narrows roads

In Leeds:

Not enough activities and places for kids
 Need more small industry /offices, Lack of stores, cafés, need cable channel
 Need more open space and protect, Balance green with business
 More public transportation, Car speeds reduced, paved road for bikes

In Florence:

Isolation of low-income housing, need diversity
 Businesses concerned with the impact of low income residents
 Loss of retail, Small business and industry loss, high transience,
 No natural food stores or restaurants
 Shortage of parking
 Getting too big
 Need more community communication, greater sense of neighborhood
 Noise and traffic, Worried about increased traffic that comes with growth
 Difficulty in maintaining affordable housing, Cost of living
 Safety issues increasing,
 School quality, No school within walking distance
 Need stricter zoning regulations
 Need more green space downtown, Need more sidewalks

LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN/CHANGE/KEEP (Usually if resources not an issue)

Build footbridges across Mill River-Smitty's store-Wire co

More snow removal downtown including sidewalks

Less chlorine in Water/Improve water quality

Fencing on top of bridge

Keep things as they are at State Hospital- make right of ways through State Hospital

More growth in Florence, Leeds, and Northampton Center

More coordinated effort between local groups and city - Lake Fitzgerald

Newcomers guide to Northampton

More single family apartments

*Encourage locally owned business

More education on how transportation system should be used

Make streets safer for bikes

Fewer restrictions on Musante beach

Preserve Smitty's, Hospital hill

Preserve mix(industry, residential, socio-cultural)

*Calm traffic(speed bumps / obstacles)

Sewer and water lines defined development

Preserve downtown

Enforce smoking laws

**Light rail from Florence to Northampton to Amherst and within Northampton

*Public outdoor pool

*Village green/square in Bay State center in front of Cutlery building

**Role of Northampton in regional planning

*Bay State identity to be preserved

*Growth boundaries around developed areas

*Public education campaign on environmental issues

*Cable channel for Leeds

*Maintain infrastructure (expand water system to serve all residential areas)

*Encourage arts

Increase the contribution of Smith College to community benefits from their skills

Make use of air space above Caldor parking lot

Diamond hall complex

*Incubators

Leeds -- Stay the same, Preserve rural quality, Coffee shop, Downtown skate park, less bedroom/more self sustaining, Monorail to UMASS, Raise quality of elementary education

Northampton

Less bedroom community, Avoid becoming "greater Springfield,"

More alternative transportation; shuttle buses,

Noise pollution ordinance and Eliminate neon sign

Don't tax downtown business too much,

Greater community participation in government, better identification of boards

Preserve open space /hist. buildings, More green in dev. areas(plant trees on King St)

*Need solid waste , recycling

Keep business in regional neighborhoods, not cut off by big roads

FIVE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS

*Control sprawl and **Maintain/preserve open space

Minimize auto uses with public transit and incentives offered to employers to reduce auto use

Social services provided to those who need them

Northampton should accept responsibilities with being economic and social service center

Keep subsidized housing, but new subsidies should go toward purchase rather not rentals

Do not concentrate subsidized housing but disperse it

Set up economic development commission

**Affordable and diverse housing – creative solutions

Schools – improve and figure out how to provide for increase in school age children

Limited development along the Mill River

Solve problems of making urban center safe and attractive

Safety services and infrastructure

Preserve and expand diversity and social cohesiveness

Jobs

*Access – cars, mass transportation, bikes, feet

Support neighborhoods – policing, schools, village idea, historic preservation

*Get to schools for kids' input in 2020 vision

*Develop village centers with residential commercial and employment

*Involve community members decision making/develop a safe and welcoming community

*Plan for efficient and non polluting transportation systems

*May not be growth but change

*Schools and community centers

Affordable business space